

"GUIDE DOG SERVICES IN HAWAII."

by

Sam Fisk

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library staff will also advise individuals on how to go about a genealogical search." For further information write to:

The Genealogical Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped, Inc.
15 Dunwoody Park, Suite 130
Atlanta, GA 30338

Inquiries can be made in any media and replies will be in that format or whatever one requests. This is the only library of its kind in the world. Wouldn't it be interesting to find out that Grandfather's cousin twice removed on Mother's side really did come over on the Mayflower (as a stow-away?).

"GUIDE DOG SERVICES IN HAWAII"

by Sam Fisk, Orientation and
Mobility Specialist

The Eye of the Pacific Guide Dogs and Mobility Services, Inc., is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization supported by the Aloha United Way and other endowments. The Eye of the Pacific was formed for the purpose of providing free of charge guide dogs and electronic mobility aids to benefit the active independence of blind persons.



*News Is Helting Around
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In its twenty-four year history, the Eye has provided more than twenty-five guide dogs and hopes to continue such services for future generations of Hawaii's people.

In 1975, The Eye of the Pacific, after careful evaluation, entered into a working agreement with the National Guide Dog and Mobility Training Centre, located in Melbourne, Australia. Previous to this arrangement the Eye had trained its dogs at its headquarters in Honolulu, at considerable expense. The use of Australian dogs reflects the Eye's continuous attempts to upgrade its services and these animals are without doubt, the best prepared animals that it has had to offer to date.

The Australian National Guide Dog Centre has been preparing guide dogs for the blind for over twenty-three years and has a well established international reputation for excellence. Their guide dogs are scientifically bred to insure the physical, emotional and intellectual qualities that will enable their animals to serve reliably as guide dogs. Only the best puppies are chosen after careful physical examination and behavioral testing. These select pups are then sent out to foster homes to be raised by young Boy and Girl Scouts, who house-break, provide basic obedience training and generally acquaint them with life in the average home. These youthful volunteers also walk their puppies throughout their city to get them used to the sights, sounds and smells so that as adults these dogs will not be upset by loud noise and busy traffic.

At the age of nine months the dogs are returned to the National Guide Dog and Mobility Training Centre to face yet another evaluation prior to being paired with a trainer who begins the pet-to-working-guide dog transformation. For a period of four to five months the guide dog is taught to detour around objects in the trainer's path, stop at curbs and stairs and watch out for low-hanging obstacles that may strike its trainer's head. Though taught to be obedient in following directions the effective guide dog will refuse a command that would endanger its master. During training a careful record is kept of each dog's personality and physical characteristics so that at the conclusion of training, it can be matched to the personality and activity patterns of its new master. Every guide dog graduating from the National Centre is safe and fully reliable. The extent to which a guide dog's guidance skills will develop after it assumes its duties depends on the user's ability to relate to their dog and the quality of their working relationship.

Guide dog training services are provided free of charge by the Eye of the Pacific, though recipients are required to house and maintain their guide dogs at their own expense once training is completed. Guide dog training takes place once a year in the early Spring. The Eye provides training services throughout the State. Neighbor Island guide dog users must complete the first part of their training in Honolulu with the remainder of their training provided in their home community.

While the Eye of the Pacific is dedicated to making wider usage of guide dogs possible, it must also insure a wise distribution so that these valuable animals are effectively used. The Eye of the Pacific's Board of Directors has established a screening committee to evaluate all interested applicants. The Mobility Office at Ho'Opono, the State Agency serving the blind and visually handicapped, assists the board in performing this assessment. This system of selecting candidates for guide dog training is not designed to exclude, but include all persons whose life may be significantly enriched by the unique relationship between a highly trained dog and its blind master.

Persons interested in guide dog ownership should call the Eye of the Pacific (988-6681), for additional information. For details on the National Guide Dog and Mobility Training Centre's guide dog program, a tape cassette of the book GUIDE DOGS IN AUSTRALIA by Monty Hamilton-Wilkes is available at the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Please contact the Library if you wish to borrow it.

KA LEO O' AIKANE IS BACK

Ka Leo O'Aikane (Voice of a Friend) is a non-profit, all volunteer group working to improve communication and working to bring the printed word to the visually impaired in Hawaii.

The first program of "The Editorial Page" was heard on November 3 over KAIM



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